

THE CASE FOR THE ARABS

The following excerpts from a speech of Dr. Mahmoud Fawzi, United Arab Republic's Deputy Premier, before the General Assembly of the U.N., give a few facts not generally known.

Once more in less than 11 years, I come to this rostrum in the wake of my country being subjected again to multiple aggression and having, once again, lost control over part of its territory, without, nevertheless, losing either its faith in good principles or its determination to defend itself and to stand by what it believes is right.

In 1956 Egypt was singled out for attack. In 1967 Syria and Jordan have been brought in. Who is next? Who is next in line? You? You? You? — in Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Balkans and God knows where else.

In the Middle East, it is our very life which is threatened; if this goes on, no Arab government, even if it wants, can stop the explosion — the whole situation would go out of hand, with no holds barred, and the bluff of those who particularly in the West, say that they do not care could definitely be called.

Two days ago the President of the United States, on television, and Mr. Eban from this rostrum, told us, with invisible tears rolling down their visible cheeks, how foolish it was for Arab countries to spend a big part of their much-needed income on arms. Neither of them, however, bothered to give a thought, even for a single minute, to why that was so — if not because of the United States, which encouraged or sponsored Israeli aggression before and after 1956, culminating in the treachery of June, 1967.

Nor, of course, did they care or choose to remember the tarnished history of Israel in Arab lands, a history saturated and overflowing with aggression, even strangely as it might seem, since before Israel was born. The names had been different: Irgun, Haganah and all sorts of political Zionist terrorist organizations, but the crimes were the same; Dair Yassin, Tiberias, Haifa, Jaffa and Safd before 1948, as a prelude to Gaza, Khan Yunis, Kibla, Houla, El Sammar and, as late as 1967, Syria. This was followed in May and at the beginning of June of this year by military and other Israeli threats and provocations.

'To Keep Matters Under Control'

The Arab countries, while trying to take the necessary precautions, exerted themselves to keep matters under control, taking, in Sinai as well as elsewhere, a posture of defense and not one of attack. At the same time, we assured the Secretary General, as he later mentioned in his report to the Security Council on his visit to Cairo, that it was our firm policy not to take the offensive, nor did we spare any effort to avoid any eruption of the situation, and we have been in continuous consultations with many capitals in the world, including Washington, with the same objective in view. Yet it is now common knowledge, while the Security Council was discussing the situation and while a Vice President and a Deputy Prime Minister of my country were, upon agreement with Washington, for a talk with President Johnson, Israel let loose its treachery and launched its carefully planned aggression.

We shall have before us in the coming days a long and arduous debate; and we know that debate is not, or must not be, an end in itself, that it must be a contribution toward establishing facts and deriving proper conclusions, a road leading us to truth, not away from it.

Even to those who look upon debate as a kind of sport, we can say, let us then be worthy sportsmen and observe honestly the rules of the game, as well as the basic principles which form the foundation of our endeavors.

What are these principles, we are sometimes led to wonder, or rather what are they not? Do they say, for example, with President Johnson that the United States would be justified in imposing by force its point of view on a mooted matter like the passage in the Gulf of Aqaba, or do they still say, with the Charter, that we, the members of the United Nations, have forsaken the use of force for solving differences? Do they say again that force is to be the arbiter, that aggression must be rewarded, that the aggressors must be pampered and, for good measure, allowed



to keep the spoils of their treachery; and do these principles say that the victims of aggression must be punished, told to keep quiet about it, and resign themselves to their fate?

Do these principles tell us further that even before coming to this hallowed hall and before any discussion begins on a vital question, like the one before us now, it be permissible that Mr. Eban allowed himself to say, as The Jerusalem Post quoted him, that even if the General Assembly were to vote 121 to 1 in favor of the armistice lines, Israel would refuse to comply with that decision? If it be so, why then is Mr. Eban, in particular, attending these meetings, and why at all are we in our 121 delegations carrying on our deliberations in spite of his throwing the gauntlet at the Assembly's face?

A Rejoinder to President Johnson

Is this what we want? Is this what anybody else, in his senses, should want? The answer must clearly be no. It must be that what we all, without exception, should want is peace and prosperity, a life full of hope and based on justice, permeated with honest respect for people's rights.

Some have been telling us, near breakfast time two days ago, that what they are aiming at is virtually the same. To those we say: Prove it! Prove it, indeed, and show a clean hand if you will, if you can; none would then be happier than we, for our own and our children's sake, for the sake of all the peoples of the world.

The Secretary General has been nastily and repeatedly criticized by President Johnson, by some of the Western leaders and by Mr. Eban for what they term his "hurried" action in relation to the withdrawal from the United Arab Republic of the United Nations Emergency Force. They have been taking this thoroughly unwarranted position against which U Thant has, yesterday and before, proved himself quite capable of defending his actions and truth. His critics have taken that position unjustly, mischievously and with nothing at all being done or even just recommended by them about the misery, the debris and the mess brought by the treachery, the results of which we are dealing with now.

May I refer in this connection, to a statement which I made on the 2d of February 1957, in which I reiterated the position of my Government, submitting that "The entry, the stationing and the deployment of the United Nations Emergency Force must be with the consent of the Egyptian Government as an indispensable prerequisite, for the United Nations Emergency Force is in Egypt not as an occupation force, not as a replacement for the invaders, not to resolve any question or to settle any problems, be that problem in relation to the Suez Canal, to Palestine or to freedom of passage in territorial waters. It is not there to infringe upon Egyptian sovereignty in any fashion or to any extent but, on the contrary, it is there for the sole purpose of giving expression to the determination of the United Nations to put an end to the aggression committed against Egypt and securing the withdrawal of Israel behind the armistice demarcation line."

Near and during the time of aggression, the Sixth Fleet, bristling with evil and foully

smelling C.I.A., was ominously poised, not near its usual haunts but right next to the Arab shores, where its presence has been resented, and near Arab ports to which its proposed visit has been rejected.

Meanwhile Israel committed in the territories it invaded, a great variety and a great number of almost unbelievable atrocities.

These included bombardment of the Arish Hospital, the civil hospital and the ambulances, doing away with a great number of the wounded both civilian and military, killing great numbers of civilian youths, especially in the Gaza Strip, bombarding towns with napalm bombs, leaving the wounded, both civilian and military, stranded in the desert to travel on foot long distances from Gaza to the canal, approximately 250 kilometers, with no food or water for days after the cease-fire, and stripping them of their clothes — acts which resulted in the perishing of hundreds of them — destroying all constructions and projects, looting all storehouses including those of relief works, taking even the milk stored for the children, killing all those who disobeyed orders to give anti-Nasser denunciations, trying to block all aid offered by the Red Cross or the U.A.R. to transport the wounded. These atrocities, among many others, have been reported to the Red Cross and to the Secretary General by the Government of the United Arab Republic.

Such then is the trail of marauding Israel: such then are the ugly scenes. The crimes which then resulted from the acts of vandalism are far below the dignity of being war. Whatever they may be called they must be stopped, they must be irrevocably relegated to the past and never allowed again. This, we submit, and governments representing more than two-thirds of the inhabitants of the world share our views. Yet, it can only be done if we, in this great Assembly and beyond, base our action on the principles and decencies which we firmly believe in and on full regard for the purposes of the Charter and the dignity of man.

Please bear with me if I take a few more moments to recapitulate and sum up the position of my Government.

'Aggressive Plans' Ready in Advance

1. On statement of relevant facts, on principles and proper norms of good civilized international behavior and on our rights relating to our territorial waters, on all these basic matters, our position is supported by governments representing, as I have already pointed out, more than two-thirds of the population of the world.

2. Long before Israel launched its attack against us on the 5th of June, Israel and its co-conspirators had prepared their aggressive plans with absolute thoroughness. The blueprint was ready, the die was cast and the finger of treachery was tight on the trigger. As the moment of infamy approached, Israel released a chain of calculated threats, redeployment of armed forces and a vicious crescendo of aggressive probings all around, several of which have been condemned by the United Nations.

3. When, on June the 5th, Israel exploded evil, we, as our representative, Ambassador el-Kony, told the Security Council in great detail, had not yet completed our defensive precautions in Syria. A similar condition prevailed in Syria and in Jordan.

4. For years and years, well before President Johnson imparted to us his pious advice the day before yesterday, and even before President Johnson was President at all, we had started briskly and activated with utmost determination bold programs of economic reconstruction, social progress and national rehabilitation. President Johnson might have heard of our High Dam, our agrarian reform, our new steel works and other industries, our much improved Suez Canal and our great discoveries and production of petrol.

We could have much more of all that: we ardently want to. We could dedicate ourselves more completely to the improvement of our people's sort and to a bigger contribution by us to world happiness and prosperity. If only Mr. Johnson would "reason" more as he loves to say — if he would put a final end to his aiding and abetting Israel's insane ventures.